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Issue: Trigger Development

Discussion: Task Force FSEs/FISTs fail to adequately develop both technical and tactical triggers in order to execute targets in support of their EFSTs. The FSE needs to begin this process during the COA development phase and further refine these triggers during the wargaming phase during the MDMP to ensure that the triggers for fires are synchronized with the task force scheme of maneuver. By ensuring both technical and tactical triggers are developed, task force observers can ensure fire support assets are ready to execute targets (tactical trigger) and then fire the targets at the precise time (technical trigger) in order to achieve the desired effects set forth in the EFST. Additionally, target emplacement is an essential component to fire support in Engagement Area Development in order to engage the enemy with timely and accurate fires. This task is very important and the TF FSNCO needs to make sure that this gets accomplished. All triggers must be deconflicted with maneuver Target Reference Points (TRP). Currently trigger-marking kits do not exist within many of the task forces. The physical marking of triggers is then left to the discretion of the individual FIST teams by what they were able to find upon the desert floor to use. Moreover, when a trigger is marked, it should be annotated and disseminated so that everyone knows the trigger within the engagement area.

Recommendation: The FSE must conduct proper battlefield calculus and time/distance analysis in concert with the other BOS elements during the COA development and wargaming phase of the MDMP. Specific attention should be addressed in using doctrinally correct movement tables, ammunition charts, planning ranges, planned routes, fire mission transmission times, FDC/Gun fire mission processing time, and time of flight. This will assist the FSE in fire support planning and ensure that triggers are properly developed and synchronized into the task force scheme of maneuver. Additionally, a trigger kit should be established and standardized within the TF. This kit should be incorporated into the TACSOP along with how the trigger should be marked and placement of triggers based upon the type of enemy threat. For example, if the enemy threat is enemy vehicles, and the target is a long distance away, a bigger marker may be required, like a VS-17 panel. All triggers should be PLGR in and disseminated. There are four techniques for the marking of triggers: physical, thermal, laser, and event driven. These differ because of the different rates of march the enemy will use between daytime, nighttime, and periods of limited visibility. All four of these trigger types should be emplaced for each target, if time permits.